224

1. Pitfalls (ebēi, ndáh I)

The simplest kind of trap, the pit, is to be found throughout the entire region. Everywhere along the paths through the forest there are narrow, rectangular pits, many of which are three meters deep. They are so close to the path that at times they can be a source of danger -- carefully covered as they are -- to pedestrians who are not paying close attention. Near the bottom they become so narrow that a person falling into them remains hanging wedged between the walls halfway /118/ /Fig. 67 appears here in the original text/ and cannot get out again by himself. Pits having pointed posts at the bottom are not for wild animals; they are used only in war. The pits are usually constructed by two people, the owners, of whom one digs while the other carries away the dirt. The person who has done the digging may not have any sexual intercourse for five days after this work, for the pit is a hole like the female sex organ; thus, if he were to defile himself through sexual intercourse with a woman, he would not catch anything in the pit.

2. Spring traps (ekūidí)

The Pangwe distinguish seven types of spring traps, that is to say, traps in which the animal is killed either by a tree trunk suspended over a passage and released by means of a trigger device or by a freely balanced, weighted plate, raised above the ground.

A. True spring traps for wild animals
   1. ekūidi-osá,b or osă,b
   2. ekūidi-esǭ'dǭ
   3. ekūidi-nkǭk
   4. alū,ńa-ekūidi

B. Rat spring traps
   5. ekūidi-o-si,
   6. ekūidi-o-jo'b

C. Spring plates
   7. akūi

/119/ /Figs. 68 and 69 appear here in the original text./

411 and a wooden handle well-shaped for the hand. The handle is partly bound with an iron band or brass wire. The sword is placed inside a wooden sheath, consisting of two halves and frequently covered with monitor lizard skin, or in a brass sheath which has two brass eyelets for the hide strip worn over the shoulder from which the weapon hangs /246/ /Fig. 79 appears here in the original text/ (see Fig. 80). After the appearance of the chopping knives or choppers imported from Europe, the latter displaced the sword for a while and were then carried about in sheaths (Fig. 81); however, these are no longer in use today.

The battle-ax, called ovunebokui, "axe of the Pygmies" [184] (Fig. 82), is of lesser importance and is to be found only among the Fang, especially the southern ones, but even among them only in small numbers. It can be used only for short-range fighting. Its wedge-shaped blade with a convex cutting edge and /247/ corners curved inward, is fitted into the handle, the short lower half of which is round while the upper half is flattened out.

As a protective weapon, three kinds of shields are in use: the wooden shield, the shield made of buffalo hide (Fig. 83), and the shield made of an elephant's ear. The latter two are supposed to protect an individual man. They have lost their importance since the appearance of the firearm, and today they have /Fig. 80 appears here in the original text/ become quite rare. The wooden shield (stationary shield, Fig. 84), on the other hand, protects the entire troop of warriors and is, as it were, a portable rampart carried ahead by one man, while the others hide behind it. When the enemies clash, they shoot from behind the wooden guard, and in case it becomes necessary to flee, the shield is simply abandoned. It is made from a slab of wood from the umbrella tree and is approximately 145 centimeters long and 37 centi- [53] meters wide. The outer surface is covered with patterns carved in relief, such as we have seen in Section 9 /Ed., Vol. I/.

The battles of the Pangwe are usually only to settle hostilities 726 between neighboring villages and hence are limited to small-scale warfare, that is, to a series of surprise attacks in which the attacker naturally has the advantage and thus "wins." Such encounters, however, give the tribe their warlike reputation; the

[Text continues on page 97]

411

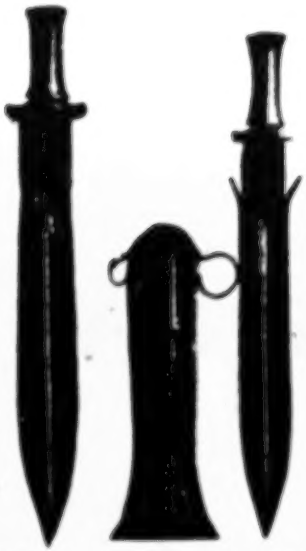

Fig. 80. Swords and Sheath made of Brass. One-fifth actual size.

726 Fang especially are extremely warlike and quarrelsome and not at all disinclined to military expeditions that promise to yield booty. At the same time, they know how to take full advantage of their forested land. They surprise the enemy at impassable [724] places, lie in ambush in the dense bush, and sometimes carry out night raids when the occasion is favorable, whereas generally the Pangwe is loath to undertake nocturnal expeditions. Furthermore, they impede the advance of the enemy through "chevaux-de-frise," that is, pointed sticks made of the bark of raffia leafstalks and planted in the ground, as well as through pitfalls which are well covered like the traps for game, but wider and [725] deeper, and similarly spiked on the floor. In hand-to-hand com-[824] bat they throw the spiked stems of Macaranga ledermanniana Pax (asks) between the legs of their enemies. /248/

/Figs. 81 and 82 appear here in the original text./

722 In unsettled times, women, children, and -- insofar as this 712 is possible -- movable property are taken to safety, that is, to hiding places in the forest or to friendly villages. Fortifications

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

789 *bieti*). He brings it. He eats the fowl. When finished, he takes a bone of the fowl and the excrement of the *bieti*. He cuts his nails and his hair. He ties (all these things) up in a bundle or packs them inside the horn of a small deer and keeps it.

When a man goes on a journey he carries this medicine with him. Another person cannot see him as he journeys.

This is the *Bieng e Seli*.

Bieng-akoma.—The people get up and take machetes and cut a clearing. When they have finished the clearing is open and bright. If a man has died and been long in the grave, they take his bones, and lay them out on the ground. They cover them over with earth. They take other bones, and cut them up into small pieces. They put (these pieces) in a basket: they put in also red dye, and scrapings from the bark of trees. They close up the basket. If they go to war, they carry the basket (suspended by a cord from) the shoulder. They take the red dye which ● (716) is in the basket and smear the body with it. If an enemy (literally, a person) fires a gun (at them), they will not be pierced (by the pieces of iron put used as bullets).

This is the *Bieng-akoma*. Do not tell it to women or children; only to grown real men—for it is tabooed.

Nsuke Bulwa.—Fang make it thus. If a man makes witch medicine, he kills 754 his brother and other people. They say, let us make *nsuke bulwa*. They take a corpse, and go with it to the bush. They cut bush. The bush is clear and open. They sweep clear the place which they have cut. They lay down the corpse in the place which they have swept. They dig plenty of dirt, and make it in the shape of an elephant (over the corpse). They make the trunk, the tusks, the eyes, the legs, the tail, the ears. They finish and return to the town. They say, we have made *nsuke bulwa* (*nsuke* means elephant). They say if a man goes out to kill by witchcraft, he will die. If a man wishes to kill another with poison, he will die. If a man lies with a woman in the daytime he will die. Let not a woman eat a pig. And so they say, they have made this fetish, the *nsuke-bulwa*. When they have done so, if a man lies with a woman in the daytime he gets sick. They go and scrape trees in the bush; they bring water from the river, and put the scrapings in the water. They catch a fowl outside and put it in the medicine-water. They touch the man's body over with the fowl. And so that man, they heal him from his fetish-sickness. Then he is well.

This is *Nsuke bulwa*.

Bieng-ebeting.—If a man has married two or three women, and loves one, but 832 dislikes the others, the latter feel badly. They make *bieng ebeting*. When they [514] go to pass their faeces, they take a very small piece of their faeces. They rub off the grease from their skin, and mix this grease with the small piece of dung. They put it (the mixture) on the drying-shelf (over the fire). When it is dry they mash it to powder, and put it in the neck of a gourd. They take also a shrub called *ebeting* (known only by women) and put it in a small gourd (not the neck of

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

832 584 583 give him (the father) the *bele* (dowry). The father of the young virgin takes the goods to his town; the young man remains in possession of the woman.

They marry with *bieng-edoma*, eloping medicine then.

This is *Bieng-edoma*.

721 789 *Bieng-along* (war medicine).—Told me by Fam-dzu, a Fang, Essis clan, at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 19th, 1898. This *bieng* was illustrated to me: a leopard tooth is the *Bieng-along*.

Make a bowl of war medicine, of leaves, roots, and bark. Call all people of the town. Drop the leopard tooth into the medicine. If the point of the tooth *looks* toward the people we have a palaver (trouble) with, then we must go and fight and we will win. If the root of the tooth points toward the people we have a palaver with, then we must *take sit* (sit down) or our enemies will win if we go to fight them.

This is the *Bieng-along*.

789 611 622 *Bieng-akumeyong*.—This *bieng* is the protector of the tribe or nation (*eyong*, tribe).

Told me by Eelya-fwam, the headman of Foulabifong on the Nkomo river, who sold me the complete set of the *Bieng-akumeyong* belonging to the dead headman "Commissa." I present this *bieng* for your inspection this evening. The tin canister was obtained from a white man and is used in place of the usual basket to carry bones in. It contains portions of the skull of an albino (male), portions of the skull of a *mon eparé*, young chimpanzee, red powder and a variety of native medicine.

704 594 This *bieng-akumeyong* is always carried by the headman of a town during war.

A bell hangs from the bottom of the canister containing the bones; it rings when the headman walks.

Nlo.—The small horn belonging to the *bieng-akumeyong* has *nyom* (porcupine tail) in it, also native medicine. It is used to cure people having witches. A bowl of medicine is made. The *nyom* is dipped in the medicine bowl and the sick person sprinkled with the medicine. Then the witch departs.

At this point the headman Eelya stopped talking. He said, "The children who have gathered around your house must go away; no real man dare talk about the *bieng-akumeyong* before women and children." I told the children to go and Eelya continued.

The okiale.—This is part of the *bieng-akumeyong*; it has been cooked (boiled) in the medicine bowl and has great power when used by the headman in calling the men together after a fight.

789 611 *Mon*.—This is the large horn with a piece of looking glass on top. This horn contains much medicine, and next to the bones is the most important part of the *bieng-akumeyong*.

The two small antelope horns, and the small bundles of medicine, are *bieng e meli* (hiding medicine); it makes the person carrying the *bieng-akumeyong* invisible to the enemy.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

754 *Vezge wa dang ange lim me* (Take away the curse you have [sent] put
578 upon me).
626 *Vezge wa bibomolo* (Take away the curse).
539 *Vezge wa bipege* (Take away the curse).
Bit bene mbômolo ch Anyambe ediam e mam mabê mân (People are cursed of God on account of their sins).

XIV.—*The Ngi.* (*A Fang Secret Society.*)

575 To members (*Bwetes*) the following things or *bityi* are forbidden :—
Bityi :—

1. To go and make or play at witch (make *evus*).
2. A male fowl is not to be eaten (shared) by two men of different clans.
3. Fish called *ngolo* must not be partaken of with a woman.
4. Only the initiated are permitted to eat the fish called *ngwe*.
5. Only the initiated may witness the *Ngi* dances. A woman who attempts to witness an *Ngi* dance will sicken and die.
6. Only the initiated must know about the bones used by *Ngi*.
7. A member of the *Ngi* society is not permitted to sleep on his back.
8. Food refuse must not be destroyed by fire.
9. To spit in the fire is against the law of *Ngi* (not permitted).
10. An uninitiated person will die if embraced by an *Ngi*.
11. To kick over rotten wood, logs, or forest stumps, is forbidden.
12. To cut a stick half through in the bush, and then bring it to town and break it, is forbidden. It must be cut through and the two pieces carried.
13. To kick the feet together after getting in bed, for the purpose of removing dust, is forbidden.

The violation of any of these mentioned *bityi* will bring misfortune and death on the *bwetes* (member).

Ngi means gorilla among the *Fang*; *Nji* means gorilla among the *Bulu*. The *Bulu* have the *Nji* secret society, which is reported as being precisely similar to the *Fang Ngi*; it came to the *Bulu* from the *Fang*.

XV.—*War.*

•726 During a tribal war all adults act as warriors. There is no regular organisation of fighting men. It is a typical guerilla warfare. Parties of young men go forth at night to attack towns; others watch the forest paths to shoot men passing and
[49] women going to work in the gardens. The *Fang* are noted for their love of war; they are the most warlike people in all West Africa. When a tribal war is on, a headman frequently goes out with a raiding party to attack the town; he carries with him the *bieng-akumapung* (protecting medicine of the tribe). The usual mode of attack is as follows: Having decided to attack a town, the party of men (usually ten or

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

fifteen) take their flint-lock muskets, heavily loaded with trade powder and handful of broken iron pot (iron trade pots) or small stones, and creep up close to the town after dark. Two men try to enter the town unobserved; if they succeed, then they knock at the door of a hut and say, "We are strangers travelling; give us fire and food." Directly a person inside the house opens the door, both men discharge their guns into the house, and immediately run for the bush toward their comrades. The whole town is soon in pursuit, and unless careful they run into an ambuscade prepared for them. A fight may occur, but more often the attacking party return to their town in triumph, shouting: "We are real men, we are real men, we have been to town, we have shot a man (or woman), we are men —real men." There is great rejoicing in their town, and a dance follows. If the palaver is a serious one, the town is often stockaded with split logs placed vertically in the ground; huts are likewise stockaded. Poisoned bamboo spikes are buried in the forest paths to wound the feet of an enemy. The weapons used and relied on to-day are flint-lock muskets. Spears are rapidly falling into disuse. The cross-bow is only used for shooting birds and small bush cats. It is a mistaken idea that the arrows used with the cross-bow are poisoned. Shields are not used. The chief causes of war are disputes over women, hence called "women palavers," and these feuds may last for years. Prisoners are often permitted to starve to death, and are occasionally killed and eaten. Owing to a bitter feud it is an impossible for the women to work in the gardens or fish on the river, the consequence being a great scarcity of food. In Foulabifong, where I resided, a woman palaver lasted over ten months, and the three adjoining towns were in a state of famine. A prisoner was nearly starved to death, and I had to repeatedly plead for him. During these feuds many women are shot while walking the paths. The Fang think it quite correct to shoot a woman; they say, "It is always *safe* to shoot a woman because she cannot shoot back." Prisoners are frequently exchanged, others are held as hostages.

726 ● 726 712 [411] 721 727 [726] [562]

Abal (war). Translation.

If people are going to war they go in crowds. If they approach near the town (of the enemy) they hold a council. An old man (one) he says thus: We will go to fire when? Then the others say, We will go in the night. Then they stay (sit) there until night. Darkness comes, and they light a torch. Then two or three people go to the town, and the other people remain in the bush. If the people who went to the town find people sleeping, then they point their guns inside a house and fire. Then people die. Then they go back running to meet the other people. Then they all gather in one place and return singing to their own town. Then they beat the drum and rejoice. Then the people who remained in the town say: Tell us the news as you went. Then they tell the news. Then the headman sits down and tells all the people in town that a person must not go anywhere alone. Then all the people hear, and all sit down (remain around their town to await events).

726 539

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

[787] 726 539 789

Ngong (Doctor). Translation.

The Ngong (witch doctor) prophesies war. If the war comes and is in the bush, then the doctor takes medicine wrapped in bush cat skin called *melop*, and medicine in horns. He holds the horns in his hands. He counts the horns; he hangs the *melop*. He says to the *melop*, I say thus: No person must go to the forest. If a person goes anywhere the enemy will kill him. If a person says, I will not listen to the doctors' talk, I will go and do my work; then if he goes, the enemy kill him. If they kill a person, they take the heart and put it in the *okop*. They take an old witch and put it in the *okop*. Then if the doctor prophesies, the witch speaks from inside the medicine. The heart of the person, it talks.

XVI.—*Hunting Traps.*

224 The Fang are skilful hunters, but they justly give the credit of the chase to the *Ngui* (dwarfs). I have been told that a dwarf will go hunting in the bush and return with meat after a hunting party has returned unsuccessful from the same locality; the dwarfs have great patience. If while hunting in the forest a man sees a deer, he shouts for assistance: others come and help hunt. If the deer is killed, all claim a share, after one-third has been given to the man who first sighted the game. This is the custom when a man walking unarmed in the forest sights meat, and calls for aid. Meat killed by a regular hunting party is carried to their town and divided. Dogs are used to hunt game, the dogs wear wooden bells around the neck, sometimes the bells are made of iron. Flint-lock guns are used when hunting. Before a hunting party starts out it is the custom to make *biong nnoli* (gun medicine), and to place the guns in it; this makes them shoot straight. The natives imitate very cleverly the calls of certain animals and birds for the purpose of decoy. Occasionally they drive game into an enclosure called *okon*. Spears are seldom used in the chase. The crossbow is used for shooting birds and small bush cats.

[441] Poisoned arrows are not used with the crossbow. Pitfalls for game are dug and covered with small branches and leaves; pigs and small deer frequently fall into them. A Fang never attempts to hit a bird on the wing. In firing the flint-locks the gun is not carried to the shoulder, but held by the stock in front of the body, the butt being on a level with the waist. Game laws are unknown.

After a successful hunting expedition the whole town indulges in a feast, men, women, and children eat until gorged; after a period of rest dancing commences and is kept up throughout the night.

Okon (Trap). Translation.

224 539 They take small trees and bamboo leaves and bush rope, and make a long fence. They leave holes for the traps and holes for the pitfalls (*i.e.*, opposite the